

## Mails.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY CO.'S  
ROYAL MAIL STEAMSHIP LINE,  
CHINA AND JAPAN.PROPOSED SAILINGS FROM  
HONGKONG, 1892.

(SUBJECT TO ALTERATION).

Empress of China | Saturday | Apr. 16th.  
Empress of India | Saturday | May 7th.  
Empress of Japan | Saturday | May 28th.THE R. M. S. "EMPEROR OF CHINA,"  
Captain R. Archibald, sailing at Noon, on  
SATURDAY, the 6th April, 1892, with Her  
Majesty's Mail, will proceed to YANCOUVER,  
via SHANGHAI, Inland Sea, KOBE and  
YOKOHAMA.RATES OF PASSAGE.  
(In Mexican Dollars).  
FROM HONGKONG, FIRST CLASS.

TO	1st Class	2nd Class	3rd Class
Vancouver, Victoria, Esqui- mault, New Westminster, B.C., Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, Ore., San Francisco, San Diego, Calif., Alameda, Winnipeg, Man., To Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Minn., Chicago, Ill., Kansas City, St. Louis, Mo., Milwaukee, Wis., Detroit, Mich., Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, O., Hamilton, London, Toronto, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, N.Y., Kingston, Ottawa, Ont., Mon- treal, Quebec, Que., New York, Albany, Troy, Rochester, N.Y., Baltimore, Md., Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Pa., Washington, D.C., Boston, Mass., Portland, Me., Hull, N.S., St. John, N.B., Liverpool and London via Li- verpool. Paris, via Liverpool and Lon- don. Havre, via Liverpool. Bremen. 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in example those that follow. (Applause.)  
Go,lemen, I am afraid I have wearied you with my remarks, but still I do hope that you will frankly criticise our action as disclosed in the report, so that the new Committee that you will shortly elect may receive instruction and encouragement in their conduct of the affairs of the Chamber that you delegate their care. Gentlemen, I beg to move the adoption of the report.

Hon. T. H. Whitehead—Gentlemen, before the report and accounts are passed, it had been my intention to make a few remarks on them; but unfortunately the last few days I have had severe cold and have not been able to come prepared as I would wish. I therefore hope you will pardon me if I refer more closely to the few notes before me than to a otherwise would have done. I beg to offer my sincerest congratulations to the Chairman on the address at the interesting address which he has just made, and on the large amount of good work done by the Chamber during the past year. With an active President, aided by an energetic Committee, it is, in the reach of this Chamber to do a very great deal in the promotion of British and European trade, but our interests must necessarily suffer to no small extent by such apathy and indifference as have been manifested recently in the Chamber. I am glad to see the British Minister at Peking, Sir John Walsham. The year under review has been unfortunate and exceptionally disastrous, which has been due in great measure to the violent movements in the value of silver as measured by gold. Trade in all silver-using countries has thereby been deranged and dislocated, and the latest telegraphic advices intimate that silver legislation in America will be a serious and unfortunate factor in the crisis. There is a growing conviction that the time has arrived for a serious attempt to modify the difficulties by international agreement. The other day at a meeting of the Bimetallic League held in Manchester, the Secretary stated that the movement had made marked progress during the past year in Great Britain, throughout Europe, India, and the United States. A resolution was passed by the meeting that the members of the League should endeavour to secure the establishment of a stable rate for exchange between gold and silver, and that it was the duty of the Government and Parliament to secure this immediately through an international agreement with the leading commercial nations. I think your committee might safely communicate with the Chambers of Commerce in support of this movement. Locally we have suffered seriously from an overdone and unwelcome, and heavy legislation. The new law has been passed, and the Government in crude form was rushed through the Council and passed into law within three days of the publishing of the Bill in the *Gazette*. Undoubtedly it has hit the Chinese very hard. The new Bankruptcy Ordinance is said to be a great improvement on the former law, but it is to be regretted that the Government has not seen its way to enact a law making compulsory the registration of individual partners in Chinese firms. The way is now opened for the Government to do it and in view of our recent experiences I desire the Chamber will agitate in the matter during the ensuing year. The new Opium Ordinance clothes the Opium Farmer with legal power which in Chinese hands become superior to the power of the Government; in fact the Government seems to have conceded all that the Opium Farmer asked for, and the result has been that the former's power, amounting already to a great deal, has been increased. The result has been conferred on the Farmer, yet our revenue from opium has simultaneously largely decreased, more pitiable spectacle than that exposed in the Colonial Treasurer's letter of 4th December last to the Opium Farmer, published in one of our local papers [*Telegraph*]. Can scarcely be imagined, and it is not to be wondered at that such a serious muddle was made in connection with the bill. The Government, however, are now faced that through a stupid blunder the highest bidder was not accepted. The Shaoh Bill was discussed at a general meeting of the Chamber held in June last, and was rejected. A large majority of the members, but notwithstanding this it was forced through Council by means of the more numerous vote of the Official Phoenix, some of whom did not quite understand what they were doing. The result was that the Shaoh Ordinance was passed. The passing of the bill was the feeling of the community as strenuously condemned by this Chamber, sounded the death knell to any activity and life in the local stock market. It is in the opinion of most experienced men at home an unnecessary interference with the freedom of contract, and cannot be carried into general practice. It scarcely possible to presume that the promoters of the bill are not anxious to amend the bill, and at the same time to honour the bill much in advance of legislation at home elsewhere. Is modified and amended, the bill will be for all concerned. Lord Kintnersford's sanction to the bill conditionally on the official members approving, which they did so. The new Merchant Shipping Ordinance was also hurried through Council, and passed into law with unnecessary haste, again a relief to the Chamber. The Chamber has been greatly inclined to think our new Governor disposed to modify the bill, but I do not think His Excellency the Governor can be congratulated on his reply, clever though it may be, the remarks and arguments of the deputation which was recently presented an interview with Sir Wm. Robinson. The severe restrictions the bill do not facilitate the shipping and trade of the port. They are contrary to the wishes of your Chamber. In getting the Chamber to present a memorial in the commission appointed to enquire into our quarantine laws which go against the Chamber and Government promises to body its recommendations in an amended Shipping Ordinance. The figures in the Acting Harbour Master's report on the junk trade for 1891 dated 11th January cannot, I repeat to say, as he regarded as being accurate or reliable. It is greatly to be regretted that the Government is not prepared to give the public the truth. It reads as follows:—"The only controlling causes of the depression of the junk trade the suppression of the system of export established by the Chinese Customs in Hong Kong and the preservation of the neutrality of British waters." Such a grave and serious charge as this, even if it could be supported by proof, should not appear in the Harbour Master's report. It is a statement so unsubstantiated and so dangerous to the Imperial Maritime Customs and to a friendly Power. The able and influential head of the Customs, Sir Robert Harcourt, who is well by old residents in China for to think for a moment that he would hold such proceedings as the Harbour Master says Sir Robert has rendered over a long period of years as important reasons to British merchants, and to the Chamber, is a long life of the Chamber. The paragraph in question is to be withdrawn without further delay, and a simple apology made. In well informed circles the wild agitation to have the Customs authorities move their office from Queen's Road to Canton territory is said to be inspired by persons who want ignorant of the true history of the difficulties of the situation. The existing system of the junk trade worked well for years, and it is a great pity that the Government is not prepared to give the public the truth, and I do not believe for one moment that British prestige is suffering in the least degree by the fact that the Customs have an office in Queen's Road. If there are any evils they have been clearly stated. The removal of the Customs

ally, but to Chinese territory would not remove any evils, but it has not been proved any exist. It is for those who propose the change to prove that it will work better than the present arrangement. Better I think leave well alone.

The Colony escaped a great danger from the Government's recent determination laid down by the Imperial Government for the establishment of a Chinese Consul at Hongkong. The proposal was condemned by almost every man in the Colony, Chinese as well as European. A public meeting to protest was to have been held on the 23rd July last; at which it was intended to move the following five resolutions:—“(1.) That this meeting views with the greatest astonishment and regret the action of the Foreign Office in sanctioning the appointment of a Chinese Consul at Hongkong, and considers that the appointment having in any way consulted the Hongkong mercantile community, or taken their opinion in a matter so gravely affecting their interests. (2.) That this community at times endorses the opinions expressed in 1870 and in later years by the then Governors and Administrators of Hongkong and by the merchants of those days, that the presence in Hongkong of a resident Chinese Consul has subjected the residents of the Colony to the annoyance of the Chinese Consuls, and that the community protests vigorously against any such appointment being made or allowed. (3.) That the presence of a Chinese Consul in Hongkong will have a bad effect on the resident Chinese population, weakening their sense of the power and authority of the English Government, setting up in their midst a rival authority to which they will be encouraged to appeal on all possible occasions, leading to create a very dangerous *periculum in imperio*. (4.) That the presence of a Chinese Consul at Hongkong will excite among the Chinese throughout the Empire, if it is most unfortunate that a centre should be set up round which any feeling of that sort existing among the heterogeneous mass of Chinese collected in this colony must necessarily gather. (5.) That this meeting pledges itself to use all possible means to oppose the permanent appointment of the Chinese Consul in Hongkong, and requests the Imperial Government to take steps closely over the interests of the community during the next 12 months.” The Chamber asked the Government to produce the papers on the subject of the proposed appointment of a Chinese Consul, but under instructions from Lord Knutsford his reasonable request was refused. Evidently they were of a nature that cannot stand the light of day, and the home Government apparently had no compunction in proposing to the Imperial Government to do something for Imperial considerations. I take this opportunity of expressing our hearty appreciation of the important services hitherto rendered to the Colony by the China Association in London. At its annual dinner six weeks ago the chairman, Sir Robert Yardine, in referring to the military contribution exacted from us by the Imperial Government, said:—“With regard to Hongkong he thought it was an instance where the Colony could be put to the test something like what we are now getting.” The enlightened *Singapore Free Press*, in commenting on the subject said:—“The policy that promises delivery of a consideration, demands the price beforehand, neglects to supply the consideration, and declines to return the price on application is a policy for which, in the individual, the law finds an appropriate penalty.” A truer expression than this was never made. Any permission to the Chamber put forward in Council in support of our cause. “The Colonial Office has evidently knuckled under to the War Office, and ceased to support our just cause. Lord Knutsford appears to have forgotten and to have abandoned what His Lordship at one time termed our reasonable claims, and requests this Government to increase contributions to the war effort. No such action has been made to, and that no increased expenditure has been incurred on the garrison. Possibly the Government need not carry this vote if all the official members voted in accordance with their convictions on this subject; the officials have, however, been reticent as to what their views are, in strange and striking contrast to the officials in Ceylon and Hongkong. Legislatures on this wise reject the Chamber Contributions to the Colonies, but whatever the opinions may be they are allowed no choice in the matter and will be required to vote as Government directs them. If the Government press this question and take the extra £20,000 from the colony by means of the more numerous official vote. I think the position matters might become so serious and so grave as to render advisable for the unofficial members to take in their serious consideration to unity with the majority of the Chamber, and associate men, whose votes, their opinions, and their resolution are so completely disregarded and over-ruled, and to compel them to submit to Her Majesty the Queen by petition a statement of their reasons for contemplating such a course of action. I submit this would be the only effective protest to be made to the arbitrary policy of the Home Government and its decision to impose a heavy burden of £20,000 upon us, *quid ergo* you gentlemen, had the unofficial members signed their assent in the Council in a body and had the colonialists refused to accept any appointment in the Council, by way of protest against the Imperial Government's arbitrary and unjust demands, I feel confident the Colony would not have to pay an increased military contribution but to try to get the additional £20,000. Furthermore, I am fully sure we would have had a majority of unofficial members in the Council to-day, constitutional change has just been brought about in the Colony of British Honduras far less strong reasons. After two years' persistent agitation the home Government have been brought to recognize the principle of an unofficial majority in the Legislature of the Colony, and the Colony of British Honduras, whose total population is little over half a million sterling per annum while the population of the Colony is only some 30,000, mostly negroes, can be so trusted, suppose change in the same direction might be introduced in the case of the Eastern Crown Colonies—Ceylon, Singapore, and Hongkong, any case I earnestly submit that the time now comes when all the unofficial members of the Legislative Council should hold only office by nomination or election, and not by Government nomination or appointment, as is done with three out of five of the unofficial members. Sir Alfred Dent, at the recent meeting of the China Association referred to, said he hoped to see similar institutions to the China Association started in all the ports of China, in spite of this opinion, but perhaps what may be of more direct benefit to the Colony is the fact that the China Association or a National Council with a strong and active Committee of its first duties should be to agitate popular representation in the Legislative Council. The act of administration of the Government at present is excessive and is constantly on the increase. In 1887 it was nearly \$147,000, but for this year it is nearly \$100,000 exclusive of \$65,000 of interest as compared with the revenue of £1,000,000. A commission of enquiry with view to retrenchment was asked for last December but refused. In concluding these remarks I would express the heartiest appreciation to the Chamber and its members, and to the Chamber and I would ask members to bear in mind when they come to elect a new Committee for the ensuing year we require men who will represent their shoulders to the wheel and work

Chinese men always with us" (Applicant). The Chairman said, "No gentleman has any right to say that I will propose that this report and accounts, as presented, be adopted. Mr. Gray seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed. The Chairman—Gentlemen, we have now to consider the question of the registration of imports and exports. You may remember that on March 20th, 1888, we had a special meeting to consider this subject. The Chairman, as now, was Mr. Gray. He presented a statement of the Bill which he proposed to pass, and they asked the Committee to give them their views on the subject. Then, as now, your Committee considered that the points that had to be decided were of such great importance that they could not take upon themselves to give any opinion whatever, but that the matter should be referred to the whole body of the members of this Chamber. For this reason it is brought before you now. At that meeting, on 17th of March, you may remember that a resolution was carried, by a majority I think of 2 to 1, or very nearly 3 to 1, against the adoption of the Government's suggestions. On that occasion I was in the minority. I stated that if a country or colony carried on its trade without books it was tantamount to fraud. That, as a matter of principle, I still maintain, but since that meeting in 1888 certain circumstances have occurred which, though they do not make it necessary for the appointment of a department such as is proposed by the Government to be established, here, in, in my opinion, done away with. For those who are interested in commerce, by the aid of these returns furnished by the Chinese Customs, any one, I say, in commerce here may gauge very accurately any particulars that they may wish for. In addition, you may say, in this document, which I have for your approval, are a number of suggestions which emanate from a Committee appointed at home to go into the subject. The suggestions and recommendations made there, appear to me to be totally unsuited to the trade of this colony. If they were to be adopted their operation would be so drastic that instead of having a free port as we have now we should have a Customs house without any levy for Customs duties. We should have all the embarras of having the revenue rated by duties. I am sure that if the revenue was to be assessed whether it is desirable to have that state of affairs in our midst. We would not sanction for a moment the levy of Customs duties, though I have heard it whispered that the institution of this department at in our midst might be a very convenient step towards raising further revenue to meet the enormous expenditure of this colony. Now if we once give way one slightest step in this direction, good bye to the free port, for this port and the freedom of this port is our lifeblood, and if we give that up we might as well retire from the place entirely. We might as well be at Kowloon, on Chinese territory, as in Hongkong. Another point is this, supposing that these restrictions or suggestions for the carrying out of the espionage were applied, it would mean that they would have the power according these regulations, to inspect and examine cargo if they consider that question at any time. I think the particulars tendered there are inexact. I want you to consider for a moment what that means. We have either to conduct this business with an enormous staff of Europeans, or we must trust to our friends the Chinese. With European trade I don't think the difficulty would be very great, but with the Chinese consider for a moment what it would be. There is no doubt that we have a large number of Chinese in the place, and I just leave to you to decide whether that would be desirable or not. I have seen disclosures in the past even in the police of this colony, the native police, and I am afraid we should be building up an amount of reticence that they should deeply regret in the future (hear, hear). Another point which I would remark appears to me to weigh against the adoption of such a Bill as is proposed, would be the enormous cost which would be necessary to carry out the suggestions—£2000 or £3000 would, I think, be certainly necessary to conduct the business of this statistical department. There would be new billets and more appointments, (laughter) and in the present state, this Colony I don't think that we are in a position to make them. Another, and I think probably as far as I can see, the final objection is this. The deductions that might be made from the reports, supposing the statistics were correct, or perhaps make it more to the point, on the ground of the El Dorado of this place. Very few had gentlemen here who have travelled to the surroundings and they have painted the place in terms of such brilliancy, that the oldest inhabitant failed to recognise (laughter and applause). What has been the result of this treatment? As our friends the hon. member for the Chamber has said, I think that we may put down the military contribution that we are not in a position to make, and we desire—at least don't—air to ourselves as great, grand people in a big Colony. We simply say, "Here is the place, come and see it." As far as knowledge of what we do goes, those who want to know of it easily find out and get up the particulars for the Maritime Customs returns. Beyond that nothing is required. I think that it is a thing that is subject from any gentleman to Mr. H. E. R. Belliss—Sir, referring to a question which you have just placed before me, I maintain that it is the duty of this community to foster the trade we have in the harbour rather than molest it. Therefore I measure that it is likely to hamper or harass in the least degree adversely affect commerce of this island should be thrown by this meeting, and that before the Chamber be voted with the majority against it. Several years have gone by and this lapse of time confirms me in my belief that I was right in view as I then did, and I think I shall be wanting my duty to the Colony. If I do not vote, again it again to-day. The address I then made the Chamber is on record, and I will now supplement it with a few further remarks. I mean, it seems to me that the growing trade of this position which virtually does belong to us. This is a rocky island situated on the outskirts of a vast empire, and yet we sume to make laws in order to regulate commerce with the outside world without in least thinking whether or not it will suit convenience of those outside us to abide by it. This is not a port of entry. It is a place where vessels call to take up the goods and to exchange their commodities. There are several cities within a stone's throw of this island, which are really the trading centres of this large country. I island is not like any other British colony that has been pointed out to us as an example for us to follow. Our geographical position, with exception of Gibraltar, is quite unique. Gibraltar is in Spain, Hongkong is in China. We are in the middle of the world, and if we harass the trade we have, that would deprive us and

This question was first mooted by Mr. Gladstone's speech at Manchester. The Chamberlain stood out like ourselves, though there was no concerted action between us. We acted individually without consulting each other or obtaining any exchange of views on the subject. As it turned out the community there thought the same as we did, that if they adopted the proposition it would prove detrimental to their interests. They did not want to give up their trade, and therefore there has been a consistency of feeling between the communists. Gentlemen, I am not now speaking with reference to the foreign shipping. Probably those vessels being accustomed to these affairs outside of Hongkong might furnish these returns without the least gudgeon; but the junk owners, the Chinese consignees, will look on this arrangement as a kind of espionage established by a private club of private agents. Gentlemen, I don't think we could do this, and we don't wish to harm to this colony; I don't think you are aware of the amount of damage espionage is doing to the colony. Entail another espionage and you will ruin the colony. I maintain that this port is a free port. We have laws and regulations made consistent with the freedom of this port. Junks resort to us for trade; they live in our harbour in comfort and in peace. Make these laws stringent and you will ruin them. This colony is one of vital importance to the world. They serve as feeders to the foreign ships. They bring to us cargo from all the nooks and corners of this wide Empire, from places where foreign vessels cannot go, being non-treaty ports. Cut off this supply and you will cut off the demand. If these junks do not come here the foreign vessels will have to find fresh fields and pastures new. We know it is so because this country is the centre of commerce, and we have had commercial disasters and monetary troubles through over-speculation in shares. Apart from the disasters and calamities, however, we have had depreciation in trade generally. It was a mystery not only to me but to several old residents here as to the reason and cause of that depression. There was not that healthy demand for goods for legitimate purposes. Vessels came in, yet were without cargo. We have had the same thing since. It was a mystery in my mind the cause of that depression. I say that our thanks are due to the Harbour Master for having unravelled that mystery, for having discovered and brought to light the cause of that depression. He tells us in his report that in 1897 there was a decrease in the junk trade in the face of an increase in the foreign shipping—a decrease of 308,691 tons. Now, that is inconsistent with common experience. You see that there was an increase in the fact that whenever there was an increase in the junk trade there was an increase in the foreign trade also, and *vice versa*—they went hand in hand together. Considering that this decrease did actually take place in 1897 it serves us to infer that there was some extraordinary cause at work. Later on he tells us that it was due to the espionage practised and exercised by the authorities connected with the Maritime Customs for four years. Well, let us get to the bottom of this. We will find in that year with the increase in the foreign shipping there was also an increase in the junk trade of 154,748 tons. Add these figures of 1890 to the decrease of 1897 and you have a total of 468,709 tons. That is to say, under ordinary circumstances had there been no espionage the trade of this colony would have been better in 1897 than by 463,709 tons. Now we all know that these junks never go away empty. They sort out with foreign merchandise. Allowing that they went away with half their capacity of cargo we have 331,854 tons, making a grand total of 695,563 tons. To give it a value say of \$5 a ton for those cargoes, we have in money value \$3,478,378. This, sir, represents the deficiency in the junk trade of 1897. A very good reason for the depression, and that is the result of our espionage. I haven't drawn on your knowledge for these figures; I have taken them based on facts—there was more than corroborated by statistics published by the Customs authorities themselves. According to the *Daily Press* of March 10th I find that according to their own showing there was a decrease at Kowloon station of 1,246,039 Halkwan taels in the junk trade of 2,466,039 Halkwan taels. Reducing this into dollars you get \$9,080,070 against my \$3,478,000. I have said "I'm sorry," but not corroborated, because I have taken an altogether higher figure representing cargo lost. It may have been taken away by the junks, but the Customs have based their calculations on the actual takings at this station. This shows the large deficiency in our junk trade. In the same paragraph, they tell us that simultaneously there was an increase at Canton of 2,278,520 Halkwan taels, proving what I have stated. If we kill the trade here that trade will find shelter in one of our sister ports. It is not fair to give them so easily, and I request permission to give them our opinion. What reason? There is no tangible reason for a requisition of this kind, because we can always rely upon getting these returns and accurate information from the Customs authorities. The toll us it is not wanted for raising revenue; therefore if we furnish these returns not of dollar-of-tax will be relieved. Therefore why satisfy a few statisticians in England to run down the trade of a country whose prosperity depends on its trade? On these grounds if you permit me I will propose the following resolution—"That this Chamber is of opinion to the proposal to obtain returns of cargo from vessels coming in and going out of this harbor, if adopted, prove detrimental to the interests of this Colony, therefore I recommend the Government to abandon the idea of enacting such a measure as would be required leave to mention to Mr. Amet from the Colonial Secretary about registration of imports and exports, in which said the original Bill was objected to by the Chinese, and was consequently withdrawn instead of saying, as he ought, that it was objected to by the Chinese and by the Chamber." Because the Chamber sent in a petition, as we as the Chinese. The reason was that we did not want trade to be harassed, so they raised objections. They did not want trade to be harassed in any way; for instance, to the new Opium Laws. There were serious objections, which the Chairman and Mr. Whead had brought to the notice of the meeting; and also, the harassing and annoying of the junks and others all over in the Colony, if ever any case had been brought to the notice of the Government. I am glad to hear that this has been done by the part of the Opium Law. This is highly objectionable as also was registration Bill. This Bill provided that merchants could be summoned and fined imprudently for any mistake in the return which was scandalous. Besides all this, Bill would be of no earthly use to the Colonies, or to traders, or to anybody else. It was not, the Government did not consider it was money by itself, and it would be no money to the Government. Its only effect would be, further expense to the Government for its management, and serious harassing trade—nothing else whatever. He was surprised to find the Chairman had changed his mind.

The Chairman.—Not as to the principle, but as to its application here.

Mr. Ho Annet.—You have changed your mind. You have given your vote to give whether you changed your mind or not. (Laughter.) We object to this Bill to be passed, and call, if the Government want to furnish statistics to the people in England, let them apply to the Chinese Customs.

better than we could give it. I know, I am assured that our particulars never could be anything like as complete or as reliable as theirs. I am not sure they give all details of imports, but exports they do, and that, too, without interfering with the trade of the local houses.

The Mayor (Mr. Sedgwick) proposed that the Council should send a deputation to the local houses of Bellifilus. (Loud cheers).

Mr. Granville Sharp said that all along he had been inclined to sympathise with the Chairman's original opinion on this matter, but in the face of the very clear and candid returns presented in the yellow-backed Caudins returns it was not necessary, he thought, to impose any further harassment on the freedom of the port. At the present time the Customs are paid a good thing could be done without legislation. They had been overdone with legislation, and he certainly thought that this proposal ought to be urged until the way could be seen a little more clearly. They all knew well that there was espionage in the harbour at the present time. In spite of being a free port in name, this seriously hampered trade, and he thought that the people of Hongkong paid a good deal of money for their commodities in the market. Continued the speaker:—There is something wrong in these gunboats with their white hulls, here and there and everywhere. I don't blame them. I think the Customs are admirably conducted for the purpose for which they are established and we must praise Sir Robert Hart for the management of this wonderful affair for the benefit of the colony. But the fact of a competing power round there can be no doubt. It expressed in that good old French word which we should never forget, *espionnage*, upon which Mr. Bellifilus has spoken so freely. There is espionage, there is a ligament, a stricture somewhere in the inlets and outlets of this harbour, which I hope someone here will live to see removed. I would fain see the Chinese consent to the withdrawing of these gunboats and the resumption of the free status of Hongkong harbour. We must have nothing but free trade here and therefore I think that the Chairman has rightly put before us the view that we must ask the Government to postpone or withdraw the proposed resolution.

The Chairman then put the motion of the Hon. E. R. Bellifilus, which was carried unanimously.

The following Committee was elected by ballot.—Hon. J. J. Kewick, Hon. H. W. Joseph, Hon. A. J. Wood, R. M. Gray, St. C. Michaelson, and H. Hopplius.

The Hon. E. R. Bellifilus proposed, and Mr. H. Hopplius seconded, that Mr. Edwin Mackintosh be re-elected Chairman and the Hon. J. J. Kewick vice-Chairman.

The motion was carried with applause.

The Chairman—I have to thank you for the distinguished honour of electing me as Chairman. This is the third year now that I have accepted the office, and I shall as in the past do my very best during the short time that I shall be here, for the interests of this Chamber, and of the commerce of the colony. In that I yield to no one, but on my departure I am proud to think that you have selected a gentleman who I firmly believe is more capable to fill this position than myself.

The Hon. T. H. Whitehead—I think that before we go I must say a few words and that is to propose a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman for the invaluable services which he has rendered this Chamber, and the trade and commerce of the Colony.

Mr. Gray seconded, and the compliment was recorded with acclamation.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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### SONGEE KOYAH, EAST BORNEO AND LAMAG PLANTING COMPANIES. (IN LIQUIDATION.)

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The Liquidators of these three Companies called a meeting of the shareholders of each of them to-day to receive the report and statement of accounts of the Liquidators. Mr. C. S. Sharpe presided and there was a very small attendance.

The Chairman said:—Gentlemen, as there is no quorum present we cannot transact any of the formal business for which the meeting was called. It was intended to present a statement of accounts and get them passed, but this case will be decided later, so it is held over until the final meeting, which will be held according to the Ordinances. The amount per share which remains to be returned is very small that we proposed to keep it back until a final dividend could be declared, but there was a generally expressed wish to have it distributed at once, so there will be paid £7.75 on each fully paid share in the SONGEE KOYAH Co., \$4.50 on each fully paid share in the Lamag Planting Co., and £8.25 on each half-paid share of the Company. This leaves about \$15,000 margin on each company, to pay expenses at the final dividend. We propose to make these returns (which form the second dividend on Thursday next. I think beyond that statement we can do nothing else at this meeting. It was not absolutely necessary to have called this meeting at all.

The proceedings then terminated.

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### THE HONGKONG HOTEL.

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The first object that attracts the attention of visitors to Hongkong when entering the city or approaching Pedder's Wharf from vessels in the harbour is a conspicuous pile of scaffolding which encloses a huge, square mass of masonry on the water front, towering above all other buildings in the city, and by its side making the mean little insignificant principal landing stage of the colony even more shabby in appearance.

It is hardly necessary to mention that the building under construction is the Hongkong Hotel, the only first-class hotel in the low levels, and with the possible exception of "Australian" in Sydney, the largest, as it is best appointed hotel in Asia.

For years past the hotel business in the colony has been somewhat erratic; the stream of visits being such an uncertain element that during some seasons the hotels were half-empty, while others, like the late of Frangant Gardens, became so completely swamped with globe-trotting missionaries, tourists of all sorts and nationalities, of *hoc genus omnia*, that scores of people have had frequently to be turned away for lack of sleeping accommodation in the building. In view of this and of the rapidly increasing stream of visitors from all parts of the globe who constantly visit the Half-mountain, the Hongkong and Shanghai Directors of the Hongkong Hotel Co. decided to provide ample and first-class accommodation for all-comers, and at the same time adorn the city with a handsome imposing building in a prominent position on the harbour-front.

The new building, designed by Messrs Palmer and Turner, the well-known English architects, is five stories high, and has completed the hotel business will have ample accommodation for the most fastidious of guests. The new dining room is of unusually spacious dimensions, and there are also splendid drawing rooms, commodious and well-lighted billiard rooms, and rather bar worthy of the hotel—more than that, better—and need not be a day. Two hydraulic lifts of the latest type

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1. *Phragmites* (common)



